

## The Impact of Preschool Education on the Administrative and Educational Competencies of Students in the First Cycle of Basic Education in Oman

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**Abstract:** The research used a descriptive-analytical method and a sample of (350) female field teachers to examine the effects of preschool education on the administrative and educational competencies of students in Oman's first cycle of basic education. The research came to the following conclusions: Students who entered preschool education had a high arithmetic average of (3.93) for administrative competencies, and their educational competencies were also rated highly as the arithmetic average reached a high level (3.85). Administrative skills were ranked in the following manner for the first axis: (Planning, Communication, Organization, and Leadership). In terms of the second axis, which is concerned with educational skills, the study's results for reading, listening, and writing all fell within a high degree (3.67–4.09) of the arithmetic mean. This result is consistent with many international studies and trends in all countries, which concurred on the significance of the preschool education stage. Despite its significance, the research indicated that this stage is still optional in the Sultanate of Oman. The research suggests that the Ministry of Education makes preschool education mandatory by supplying and utilizing all the resources.

**Keywords:** Preschool education 1, Administrative competencies 2, Educational competencies 3, First cycle 4, Basic education 5.

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### Introduction

Childhood is a crucial stage in a person's development because it has been shown by numerous researchers and psychologists to have an impact on a child's personality (Abdul Hadi, 2006), and numerous studies have shown

that the idea of education at this stage is attractive to scientists and researchers. (Lonis, Abdullah, 2019). Early childhood education is a field of educational theory that deals with the formal or informal instruction of children from birth to age eight. It is also referred to as primary education or preschool education. (Mcdevitt, 2016). In most societies, this stage results in reading difficulties, and in some other societies, their prevalence is believed to be between 15% and 20%. (Qarhoush and Bedawi, 2020).

The studies done by researchers on preschool children and the effects of their education and academic achievement and the importance of preschool care (2018, Becton) prove the significance of the kindergarten stage in developing the child's personality and giving them various learning skills like reading and arithmetic skills as well as the development of their multiple intelligences: such as intelligence Mathematics, visual intelligence, and linguistic intelligence. (Rasmi, 2019). This was supported by the studies of Bazrawi (2021) and Al-Saedi (2020). Numerous research studies point to the importance of the kindergarten stage on the one hand and the importance of learning reading skills on the other as a gateway to learning other educational materials, a tool for self-expression, feelings and needs, and a tool for social communication.

We are driven to give this kind of education particular attention for a number of fundamental reasons that led to the establishment of kindergartens. Al-Qabbali (2021) and Abu Hassoun (2021) outlined these as follows: social goals, which entail fostering a supportive social setting for children to interact in, and they simultaneously experience Children whose parents hold certain types of jobs, with a home environment that makes up for the things they used to find in their families, and with a fundamental psychological drive that shapes the child's personality by fostering a sense of balance and through which it has a significant influence on how the child will live their next life, as well as a drive for education that is crucial and does important work. The process of preparing a child for the new environment of classroom learning includes kindergarten.

Consequently, the study's significance is clear. determining how preschool education affects first-cycle elementary school pupils' administrative skills (leadership, communication, organization, planning). To identify the quality of preschool education, its current curricula, and their role in highlighting the educational and administrative personality of the child, as well as to identify the role of preschool education in developing educational competencies (reading, writing, and listening), as well as to come up with a good recommendation for pre-school education in those skills.

### **Theoretical background**

The child was put at the fore of the future of nations and the cornerstone of their formation due to the various changes that affected societies in various social, political, and cultural areas (Al-Mufti, 2006). Care for the child and his childhood and caring for him are necessary for him to grow up as a healthy and balanced individual. This concern is not limited to the educational and health aspect only, but also includes the educational aspect, especially the linguistic aspect. Many different events affect the development of their personality, language, and morals. (Bel Abbasi, 2020) I concur that the majority of educational scholars emphasize the significance of

kindergarten as a stage that comes before the first stage of education. (Abdul Wahed, 2015).

One of the most crucial times in a person's existence is kindergarten. The importance of this stage must be accompanied by a growing belief and conscious appreciation of the enormity of responsibility and the highness of the message that kindergarten teachers aspire to because of its significant impact on what will come in the subsequent educational stages and because it is during this stage that the child's personality is formed; one of the most crucial components for accomplishing kindergarten objectives (Souman, 2014). According to Prestige (2021), this stage is the child's first interaction with the outside world and the beginning of personality development as the child learns about society, forms relationships apart from his family, and starts to pick up new skills.

As a result, we discover that childhood is the first crucial stage in a child's life during which he or she learns about the world around him and displays his or her feelings, behaviors, and mental abilities. Numerous studies have also shown that education imparts a variety of skills that help a person develop their perceptions, and they have all emphasized the significance of pre-school education. (Abdullah, 2019). The Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman has not disregarded this, as it has given early education great attention, worked to increase enrollment rates in early education institutions by encouraging investment in private education, and implemented the (preparation classes) project in some government schools of the first cycle in the academic year (2005/2006). (1-4). The Ministry has also worked on developing a unique curriculum for this level. (Al-Rahbiyah, 2018).

Statistics show that there is a noticeable increase in these institutions and an increase in the enrolment of children in early education institutions, as the number of children enrolled in the academic year 2021–2022 reached (71018), and as a result, the number of female teachers in these institutions increased (Yearbook of Education Statistics, 2021/2022). The education of children in the Sultanate of Oman is provided by private early education institutions, which are constantly expanding.

### The development of preschool education

The evolution of education and care from birth until the eighth year throughout history can be seen in the history of early childhood education and care. (UNESCO, 2006). Ibn Sina wrote in his book Al-Qanun about the necessity of working to give the child the opportunity to play until he turns six, just as Imam Al-Ghazali loudly proclaimed the need to work to make space for the child to play without affectation, signaling the beginning of the Arabs' interest in studying the characteristics of children. (Hariri, 2015) Additionally, the researcher Comenius (1592-1670) thought of working to establish schools for young children, as well as work to take care of them and give them special care. He worked on the necessity of entertaining the child, in addition to educating him, and he also thought of working to establish schools for children. (Badran, 2000).

The Berry Pre-School Project, which was implemented in the 1960s in Ypsilanti, is one of the oldest social

experiments in the field of early childhood education. It has had a significant impact on politics in the United States of America and around the world. 128 children were subjected to an experiment in African Americans bet, and before 1960, the method of educating young children was carried out in the first place as being within the responsibility of families within the home. This population was divided into a treatment group and a control group at random. Active study days during the week for the therapy group included 2.5 hours per day of instruction. The goal is to enhance parent-child interactions at home in addition to instructors' weekly 1.5-hour visits to the kids' homes (Our, 2019; Council, 2015; Schweinhart et al., 2005). (Heckman, and all, 2019).

Preschool education changed in terms of growth and development rather than remaining in its familiar shape. The first person to work on creating a prestigious kindergarten was Ferdik Frewell from Germany, and that was in the first part of the twentieth century, starting in 1984 AD. (Al-Duailij, 2008). Since 2004, the majority of American preschoolers spend a portion of their days away from their parents, the majority participate in some kind of center-based program before entering kindergarten, and in 2001, 52% of three- and four-year-olds were enrolled in preschool or another program. Prior to starting school, the enrollment percentage for four-year-olds in 2001 matched that of five-year-olds in 1970. (Alaa, 2020).

As a result of their favourable effects on children's behavior and educational achievement, pre-school and kindergarten are regarded as essential factors that must be taken into account. Despite the fact that kindergarten and pre-school education are extremely important, the ministries in charge of education did not want to make this period of a child's life mandatory by working to organize kindergartens and provide their study materials. (Hourani, 2022).

### The importance of Preschool education

The preschool education stage is a crucial one in a child's life because it prepares them for entering a new environment—the official school environment—with its established rules, procedures, and topic laws. At this stage, the child learns some fundamental abilities that will help him later in life as he embarks on his next educational adventure, both psychologically and emotionally. (Al-Qebsi, 2022). As a result, its significance can be seen in what it does to create a diverse learning environment, which is based on games like disassembling and reassembling and other technical tools like educational spaces and corners that are intended to foster children's mental and skilled development. (Schuman, 2008).

Because this stage, according to psychologists, is the crucial one that shapes the student's personality, it must meet special standards in terms of buildings, facilities, and spaces such as playgrounds, gardens, and equipment. This stage is regarded as the fundamental preparation for the child to accept the school later. In order to practice all activities that achieve integration, balance, and inclusion of the various aspects of the child's personality development (physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social), it is also necessary to take into account their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics. As a result, the idea of integrated education is achieved by implementing all fundamental activities. ( Atef, 2005).

The significance of kindergarten lies in its ability to inspire and support the development of pre-school students' administrative and educational competencies in a variety of skills (mental, social, emotional, skilled...) that make up the child's administrative and educational life and aid in its refinement in various ways and multiple ways, and among those are: The following fundamental abilities help children improve their administrative and academic competencies: (Rehab, 2005), (Al-Arabi, 2012), (Tarik, 2008), (Abdul Qader, 2007), and (Karkoush, 2008) (Mustafa, 2009).

**Language skills:**

The development of language skills starts at a young age. Children don't start out speaking a language, but after 10 months they can recognize speech sounds and speak in the baby's language. Children typically acquire receptive language skills before oral or expressive language abilities. The internal processing and comprehension of language in the brain are known as receptive language skills. Al-Nashif (1996) divided these skills into speaking, listening, listening, reading, and writing and explained that it is important to deal with each skill separately in order to provide the child with the appropriate activities. As receptive linguistic abilities continue to grow, the expressive (spoken) language begins to develop slowly. This was supported by the research of Karkoush (2008), who found that language plays a significant part in interaction between children and others and has a relationship to other skills.

**Technical skill:**

Technical methods are one type of self-expression, and they give the child a variety of ways to learn, which in turn aids in the development of his skills and views of creativity and imagination. Therefore, the child's drawing process is a complex process in which the child combines multiple forms and different symbols from his prior experiences and experiences to make something new and meaningful out of them (Abdul Aziz, 2016). He views artistic activities as a dynamic and comprehensive process with a vital role in educating children. She emphasizes that every action a child takes is motivated by a desire to accomplish an objective. As a result, we discover that when we make comments about someone's behavior, he responds in a manner that makes sense. In actuality, we were the ones who were unable to comprehend the reasons behind his actions and what motivates him to do them. With this task, we need to understand the purpose or significance of a particular behavior in order to explain it.

**Social skills:**

Whereas these abilities are viewed as a fundamental pillar that influences a child's personality in the preschool stage, through which the child can engage with others, integrate with them, play with them, and work alongside them to achieve goals, as well as learn the concepts of self-independence and self-reliance. In many of the jobs and duties he completes, he also gains the ability to engage in play, problem-solving, and emotional participation with his peers. The ability of a child to communicate and interact with his peers in a tactful, respectful, and intelligent manner as well as the capacity to handle situations, whether positive or negative, and appreciate conversation are referred to as social skills. Therefore, it is crucial for children in pre-primary education to develop and acquire social skills. Accepting the other can also help people overcome traits like

stubbornness, loneliness, and timidity. According to Al-Farhat (2014), social abilities are helpful in a variety of ways, which I have outlined below:

- One of the most crucial elements in assisting children in their process of social assimilation within the groups to which they are innately belonged as well as society is their social skills.
- Children who possess social skills are better able to solve many of the issues they face and control how they engage with others.
- Children who have social skills appreciate the activities they participate in and meet their psychological needs.
- Children who develop their social skills have greater liberty, self-reliance, and enjoyment of their free time.
- Children who are socially adept are more likely to participate in activities that are within their realm of competence and to develop their own sense of self-worth.
- Developing social skills, the ability to engage positively with fellows, and engaging in creative and innovative endeavours within the confines of their mental and physical capacities.

**Study Procedures:****Research Delimitations:**

**The topic:** Preschool education

**The implementation timeframe:** 2022/2023.

**The Study Population:** The study population represents basic education female teachers in the first field in the schools of the first cycle from (1-4) and their number is (5802) according to the statistics of the Statistical Book of the Ministry of Education for the year (Ministry of Education, 2022).

**The Study Sample:** The sample of the study was chosen randomly, and it consisted of (350) female teachers in the first field of basic education schools, the first stage from (1-4).

**The Scale:** The researcher used the five-point Likert scale, which is symbolized by: (Lowly agree - Moderately agree - Highly agree - Disagree - Strongly disagree). Where the data were coded according to the following table:

Table 1. five-point Likert scale

average	1–1.8	1.81– 2.60	2.61–3.40	3.41–4.20	4.21–5
the level	very low	Low	Medium	High	very high

**The study instrument and its validity:**

The study tool was created by the researchers by creating and constructing a tool that was derived from other

tools, and before applying the tool, it was displayed to (5) experts as the tool initially comprised of (2) axes and (35) items: (19) items. The tool's final version included (16) items in the first axis for administrative competencies and (12) items in the second axis for educational competencies. Following the experts' process, the researchers made changes in accordance with what they had noticed.

### The study instrument stability

The tool was given to roughly (60) male and female teachers from different basic education schools during the first cycle in the Sultanate of Oman to evaluate the tool's validity. The results are shown in the accompanying table.

Table 2. The stability of the study tool

#	Domain	Items	Stability coefficient
1	Administrative Skills	16	0.83
2	Educational skills	12	93
	<b>the total</b>	28	0.86

According to Cronbach's alpha scale, which measures the coherence of the tool's expressions, the average value obtained by the previous axes, which is (0.86), confirms that the stability coefficient of the two axes came close to and is categorized with high stability as shown in Table 2.

### Data Analysis

After being pulled by Excel, the data were encoded by the well-known statistical program SPSS. What percentage of elementary education students who got preschool instruction are currently using administrative competencies? The arithmetic means and standard deviations for the percentage of basic education students who got preschool instruction were extracted to provide an answer to this query.

Table 3. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the competence of administrative

#	Items	SMA	SD	level	Order
<b>Leadership</b>					
1	The personality of the student within the class tends to lead his classmates	3.08	0.879	Medium	16
2	The student likes to dominate his peers	4.22	0.889	Very high	2
3	The student relies on himself to complete the work assigned to him.	4.15	0.799	High	4
4	The student can influence his fellow students.	3.20	0.878	Medium	15
<b>Connection and communication</b>					
5	The student is excited to participate and discuss the class	4.20	0.895	very high	3
6	The student loves to participate in the school's social and	4.12	0.887	High	5

## recreational activities

<b>7</b>	The student is characterized by a cheerful and jovial spirit in the classroom.	3.94	0.678	High	12
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<b>8</b>	The student has an interesting style while speaking.	4.00	0876	High	10
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**Organization**

<b>9</b>	The student is distinguished by keeping and organizing his tools	4.11	0.923	High	7
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<b>10</b>	The student maintains a good appearance and behavior	3.65	0.789	High	14
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<b>11</b>	The student is calm and disciplined in class and school	3.90	0.897	High	13
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<b>12</b>	The student organizes his speech when answering questions	4.10	0.854	High	6
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**Planning**

<b>13</b>	The student attends his daily lessons continuously.	4.23	0.823	very high	1
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<b>14</b>	The student directs his answers towards the given question.	4.03	0.678	High	9
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<b>15</b>	The student plans future classes accurately	3.97	0.874	High	11
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<b>16</b>	Few errors occur from the requester during execution	4.09	0.789	High	8
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<b>The Total</b>		3.93	0.826	High	
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As shown in Table 3, the average of the administrative competencies axis had an arithmetic mean of (3.93) and a standard deviation of (0.826), which denotes a high degree. Accordingly, the planning-related item No. 13 ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (4.23) and a standard deviation of (0.823), which denotes a very high degree. The second order definition of leadership is "the student likes to impose his control over his peers," with an arithmetic mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 1. (0.889).

Item (3) regarding leadership, the student relies on himself in carrying out the tasks entrusted to him in the fourth order, with an arithmetic mean (4.15) and a standard deviation (0.799), it is of a high level. Item (5) related to communication, the student is enthusiastic about participation and class discussion, came in the third order, with an arithmetic mean (4.20) and a standard deviation (0.895), which represents a high degree level. The researchers explain this by saying that the students have developed a self-reliant society. The student can impact his fellow students, according to leadership item #4. It has an average level with an arithmetic mean of 3.08 and a standard variation of 0.879. This, according to the researchers, is since kids at this age are all striving for glory and elevation, and it also demonstrates that students have a certain degree of awareness thanks to kindergarten.

To answer to the second question: "What is the degree of the practice of basic education students of educational competencies who receive preschool teaching?", The arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for the degree of basic education students' practice of educational competencies who received preschool teaching as shown in table (4).

Table 4. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the educational competencies axis.

#	Items	SMA	SD	Level	Order
<b>Reading</b>					
<b>1</b>	The student reads the words correctly	4.27	0.846	very high	1
<b>2</b>	The student pronounces the letters according to their correct exits	4.25	0.889	very high	2
<b>3</b>	The student reads the texts consecutively without mistakes	3.99	0.799	High	5
<b>4</b>	The student distinguishes between the pronunciation of consonants.	3.87	0.878	Medium	7
<b>Writing</b>					
<b>5</b>	The student wrote the words correctly	4.15	0.895	High	3
<b>6</b>	The student differentiates between writing hamzas in the word.	3.36	0.887	Medium	11
<b>7</b>	The student draws the letters correctly	3.98	0.678	High	6
<b>8</b>	The student distinguishes between the tied and the open "T".	3.20	0.876	Medium	12
<b>Listening</b>					
<b>9</b>	The student listens carefully while listening.	4.09	0.923	High	4
<b>10</b>	The student answers the teacher's questions after listening.	3.85	0.789	High	9
<b>11</b>	The student remembers a lot of the information he listened to.	3.70	0.897	High	10
<b>12</b>	The student analyses the situations listened to carefully.	3.84	0.854	High	8
<b>The Total</b>		3.85	0.839	High	

The average of the educational skills axis had an arithmetic mean (3.85) and a standard deviation (0.839), which is a high degree, according to table (4). The reading-related item No. 1, "The student reads the words correctly," appeared in first place and had an extremely high degree of accuracy (arithmetic mean: 4.27; standard deviation: 0.846). The researchers' credit this to the student's kindergarten instruction in word reading and the effective reading curricula because it shows the child's family's ongoing interest in and commitment to correct reading, and phrase No. (2) showed up. In relation to literature, "The student pronounces the letters according to their correct exits" came in the second place, with an arithmetic mean (4.25) and a standard deviation (0.889), which represents a very high degree.

A high degree level was also demonstrated by item (5), which was linked to reading and in which the student correctly spelled the written words. This item appeared in the third order and had an arithmetic mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.895. The student pays close attention to what they are hearing as they attend, according to item (9). In the fourth position, with a high level arithmetic mean (4.09) and standard deviation (0.923). The habituation trait that the student gained during the preschool educational stage is credited by the researchers as the cause of this. The last thing was number four, which has to do with writing. The student distinguishes between the bound and open letters. With an arithmetic mean (3.20) and a standard deviation (0.876), which is of an average level. The researchers attribute this to the fact that the preschool stage is in which students find it difficult to distinguish between the pronunciation and writing of some letters, especially similar ones.

The answer to the third question: "What is the order of basic education students' practice of the educational competencies axis and the educational competencies who received preschool teaching?", from the arithmetic means, and standard deviations were extracted to arrange the axis of basic education students' practice of educational and administrative competencies who received pre-school teaching as follows:

### 1.Ranking of Administrative Competencies

Table 5. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the administrative competencies dimension.

#	Domain	SMA	SD	Level	Order
1	Planning	4.08	0.791	High	1
2	Connection and Communication	4.06	0.834	High	2
3	Organization	3.94	0.865	High	3
4	Leadership	3.66	0.836	High	4
<b>the total</b>		3.92	0.821	High	

The dimensions of administrative competencies were arranged in the following sequence using table (5): The first rank arrived at the planning axis with a high level of experience represented by an arithmetic mean (4.08) and a standard deviation (0.791). The second order arrived at the axis of connections and conversation with a high level of practice, as indicated by its arithmetic mean (4.06) and standard deviation (0.834). The organization axis came in third order with an arithmetic mean (3.94) and a standard deviation (0.865), and the leadership axis came in last order with an arithmetic mean (3.66) and a standard deviation (0.879), which represents a medium degree of practice.

### 2.Ranking of Educational Competencies

Table (6) Means and Standard Deviations for Ethical Leadership Dimensions

#	Domain	SMA	SD	Level	Order
1	Reading	4,095	0.836	High	1
2	Writing	3.67	0.833	High	3
3	Listening	3.87	0.865	High	2
<b>The Total</b>					

The dimensions of educational competencies are listed in the following sequence according to table 6: The reading axis comes in first place with an arithmetic mean of 4.095 and a standard variation of 0.836, indicating a high level of practice. The listening axis, with an arithmetic mean of 3.87 and a standard variation, is in second place. (0.865). And the writing axis, which indicates a medium level of practice, came in last with an arithmetic mean (3.67) and a standard deviation (0.833).

## Conclusion

The study's findings concluded that students with basic education who enrolled in pre-school education for administrative competencies had high arithmetic averages (3.93), which are close to very high, and that they had high levels of educational competencies because their arithmetic averages reached 3.93. (3.85). This shows the confluence of the two skills and how these students' abilities were polished during the preschool years. Regarding the rankings of the skills within each axis, the research revealed that the administrative axis' ranks were as follows: (planning, connections, communication, organization, and leadership). It was discovered that each of these abilities was accompanied by a strong math average, demonstrating the significance of the preschool years for students. Reading, listening, and writing were ranked in that sequence on the second axis of educational skills, and all three of them scored highly and fell within the range of the arithmetic mean (4.09–3.67), demonstrating the significance of the preschool years.

'The study demonstrates that education has a positive effect on students not only from a scientific (academic) standpoint, but also in terms of the child's personal skills, which are crucial for developing the child's personality. Most international studies and trends in all nations concur on the significance of the pre-school education stage. Despite its significance, the research revealed that this stage is still optional in the Sultanate of Oman.

## Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education should take the full responsibility for early education, as this is a crucial time for forming a child's scientific and intellectual outlook on life.
- Carefully choosing the preschool education stage's course offerings to align them with Oman 20/40's vision and current educational trends worldwide.
- The selection of pre-school employees with bachelor's degrees in kindergarten studies.

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